

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01 OMB-01
SY-05 CU-02 OPR-02 AID-05 IO-13 /079 W
-----131052Z 052294 /12

O 130858Z APR 77
FM AMCONSUL KARACHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1605
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABDAD IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL LAHORE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KARACHI 1741

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJECT: SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN KARACHI

1. SUMMARY: MANY DEMONSTRATIONS OCCURRED IN KARACHI
APRIL 12 BUT THE VIOLENCE WAS LESS THAN ON APRIL 11. A
PNA APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC TO REFUSE TO PAY BUS FARES AND
VARIOUS TAXES LED TO A SHORTAGE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT
AND THE CLOSING OF SOME MOVIE HOUSES. A PARALLEL
PNA CALL FOR PEOPLE TO WITHDRAW THEIR MONEY FROM THE
BANKS HAS STIMULATED ONLY A SKETCHY RESPONSE BY SMALL
SAVERS AS OF NOW. BOTH THE STUDENTS AND THE PNA HAVE
SCHEDULED PROCESSIONS FOR APRIL 13, AND THE PNA IS ASKING
THE PUBLIC TO QUIT WORK AT 4:00 P.M. EACH DAY AND GO INTO
THE STREETS TO PROTEST. APRIL 12 SAW SIGNIFICANT
DEMONSTRATIONS ALSO IN HYDERABAD AND A FEW OF THE
LESSER CITIES OF SIND. END SUMMARY.

2. THERE WAS LESS VIOLENCE IN KARACHI APRIL 12 THAN
APRIL 11, A DAY OF HARTAL, BUT THE POLICE HAD TO RESORT
TO LATHI CHARGES AND TEARGAS IN A NUMBER OF INSTANCES
AND THERE WERE SEVERAL CASES OF ARSON, LOOTING AND
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STONING. PROCESSIONS WERE TAKEN OUT IN WIDELY
SCATTERED LOCATIONS INCLUDING BURNS ROABAN M.A. JINNA
ROAD, KEAMARI, PATHAN COLONY, LANDHI/KORANGI, ORANGI,
AND DRIGH ROAD. REPORTEDLY THERE WAS NO GUNFIRE BY
POLICE, ALTHOUGH THE PNA HAS ACCUSED PPP SUPPORTERS OF
HAVING SHOT AND KILLED TWO INNOCENT LABORERS MISTAKENLY
THOUGHT TO BE CONDUCTING A PROTEST PROCESSION. THE

PROCESSIONS OF APRIL 12 WERE STAGED BY STUDENTS (A VERY LARGE ONE), PARTY GROUPS, SOME TRADE UNIONISTS AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS. ONE FACTORY IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN BURNED IN THE SITE AREA.

3. THERE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN NO PLANNED EFFORT TO FORCE SHOPS TO CLOSE OR TO DISRUPT TRAFFIC, BUT IN MANY NEIGHBORHOODS SHOPKEEPERS FEARFULLY CLOSED UP AND IN SOME LOCATIONS STUDENTS APPARENTLY ACTING ON THEIR OWN THREW STONES AT PASSING TRAFFIC. MUCH OF THE BUS FLEET OF THE KARACHI URBAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION WAS WITHHELD FROM SERVICE, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THE PNA HAD CALLED ON THE PUBLIC TO REFUSE TO PAY FARES (A TECHNIQUE OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE WITH HISTORICAL PRECEDENT IN PAKISTAN).

4. THE PNA HAS URGED THE PUBLIC NOT ONLY TO DECLINE TO PAY BUS FARES BUT ALSO TO REFUSE PAYMENT OF VARIOUS TAXES, TO WITHDRAW THEIR MONEY FROM THE BANKS, AND, IN THE CASE OF PAKISTANIS ABROAD, TO HOLD BACK REMITTANCES NORMALLY SENT TO PAKISTAN. REPORTEDLY THE REFUSAL TO PAY THE TAX ON CINEMA TICKETS LED TO TROUBLE AT SEVERAL THEATERS AND THE CLOSING OF SOME. AMERICAN BANKS REPORT NO UNUSUAL WITHDRAWALS. ONE AMERICAN BANKER CITES SOME INCREASE IN DEPOSITS AT HIS BANK WHICH HE ATTRIBUTES TO UNEASINESS ABOUT HOLDING CASH IN TROUBLED TIMES. HE DOUBTS THAT PERSONS WITH SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTS IN BANKS WILL WISH TO CONVERT TO CASH AND RISK HAVING IT STOLEN, AND THINKS THAT IF A SIGNIFICANT RUN ON LOCAL BANKS DEVELOPS IT WILL BE PROMPTLY REFLECTED IN A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE

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IN DEPOSITS AT THE FOREIGN BANKS. ONE SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT THE STATE BANK HAS MADE AN EXTRAORDINARY REDISTRIBUTION OF 85 MILLION RUPEES IN CURRENCY TO BANKS TO MEET A POSSIBLE RISE IN WITHDRAWAL VOLUME, BUT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BANKING COUNCIL HAS PUBLICLY ASSERTED THAT ONLY AT ONE OR TWO BANKS HAS THE LEVEL OF WITHDRAWALS BEEN ABOVE NORMAL. PAKISTANI BANKERS QUERIED REPORT THAT THE LEVEL OF WITHDRAWALS IS SOMEWHAT HIGHER THAN NORMAL BUT EASILY MANAGEABLE, AND THE LEVEL OF NEW DEPOSITS BELOW NORMAL, IN REGIONS OF PNA STRENGTH. THE ACCOUNTS, HOWEVER, NOT THE ACCOUNTS OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY. THE MOVEMENT IN THESE ACCOUNTS COULD BE THE RESULT OF SIMPLE UNEASINESS ARISING FROM A FELT NEED FOR CASH IN A TIME OF DISTURBANCES AND CURFEWS, AS WELL AS A RESPONSE TO THE PNA APPEAL. IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE WHETHER THE FLOW OF REMITTANCES WILL RESPOND TO THE PNA CALL. AN AMERICAN BANKER SPECULATES THAT PAKISTANIS ABROAD ARE MORE LIKELY SIMPLY TO TURN TO ILLEGAL CHANNELS THAN TO STOP REMITTANCES ALTOGETHER.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KARACHI 1741

5. PRESS COVERAGE OF OPPOSITIONIST ACTIVITY CONTINUES
TO INCREASE IN BOTH VOLUME AND OBJECTIVITY. MOST NOTABLE
HAS BEEN THE ABOUT FACE OF THE MORNING NEWS, A NATIONAL PRESS
TRUST NEWSPAPER. ITS APRIL 12 AND APRIL 13
EDITIONS
CARRIED THE MOST DETAILED AND UNVARNISHED STORIES
ON THE DEMONSTRATIONS OF ANY ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER.

6. NUMEROUS PROTEST PROCESSIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR
APRIL 13 UNDER STUDENT AND PNA AUSPICES. THE KARACHI PNA
ACTION COMMITTEE HAS APPEALED TO THE PUBLIC TO
CEASE WORK AT 4:00 P.M. DAILY AND PARTICIPATE IN
DEMONSTRATIONS. TO JUDGE BY YESTERDAY'S EXPERIENCE
THE PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THIS CALL WILL BE SPOTTY; ALTHOUGH
THERE WERE MANY DEMONSTRATIONS FEW OF THEM APPEARED TO
REPRESENT SPONTANEOUS PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR
THE 4:00 P.M. SUMMONS.

7. A NUMBER OF PROCESSIONS WERE TAKEN OUT IN HYDERABAD
APRIL 12, INCLUDING SOME FEATURING WOMEN. THERE WERE
SOME REPORTED STONINGS, CASES OF ARSON AND BLOCKAGES OF
TRAFFIC BUT APPARENTLY NO GUNFIRE BY SECURITY FORCES.
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HOWEVER, THE PRESS REPORTS FIRING BETWEEN PPP AND PNA
SUPPORTERS. DEMONSTRATIONS OCCURRED ALSO IN DADU,
BADIN AND MIRPUR KHAS. SUKKUR WAS BACK TO NORMAL
AFTER FOUR DAYS OF HARTAL.
MOORE

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Message Attributes

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